Disability Affairs Committee
2008-2009 Annual Report

The Disability Affairs committee met on September 28, 2008 and May 21, 2009. The topics discussed were the impact of the budget cuts on the Office of Student Disability Services and the impact these cuts have on providing services. As a result of budget cuts, the office is no longer about to pay students to be note takers in each class. Student volunteers are used to provide notes for students with disabilities. Initially, the office was able to identify note takers and provide services to students with little interruption to services. However, it is now becoming more difficult to find students who are willing to volunteer their time to provide this much needed and legally required service to students.

The Office of Student Disability Services had received funding from the Board of Trustees to create a new disability coordinator position, the assistive technology position, and to convert one part-time employee to full-time status. Two full-time employees left their positions to return to their home-state. An additional part-time employee found full-time employment in North Carolina and one graduate assistant completed her degree and found full-time employment. These staff changes have made it difficult to provide consistent support and services to students.

During this time frame, New ADA guidelines were passed by the federal government. The new guidelines make it much easier for students to register and receive services. Student Disability Services updated our policies to include less stringent requirements on the age of documentation and the amount of documentation required. These changes have made it easier for students to register with the office and we have seen an increase in the number of students registered at the same time as the budget cuts have caused a decrease in the number of staff to work with students.

As a result of the Photovoice project, the issues of accessibility and inclusion of students with disabilities have become a topic of interest on campus. Dr. Pastides appointed Dr. Christine Curtis to represent him and to follow up on many of the issues raised by students. Dr. Curtis met with each department that was addressed in Photovoice. Dr. Curtis also facilitated a meeting between the students and departments to follow up on the concerns raised by students and actions taken by each department to address these concerns. Students are now included on more campus committees. Facilities management invites students with disabilities to review plans for new buildings and renovations on campus.

The committee also reviewed the updated university policies STAF 6.00, STAF 6.01 and STAF 6.02.